

REMARKS

The foregoing amendments correct minor wording errors in claims 1, 12, 23, 34, 45, 52, 59, 66, 101 and 108. After that amendment, claims 1, 12, 23, 34, 45, 52, 59, 66, 101 and 108 are pending in the application.

Applicants thank the Examiner for his courtesy in granting an interview that occurred on August 30, 2004, between Examiner Revak and Applicants' undersigned attorney. In the course of the interview, Applicants' attorney explained the difference between the claimed subject matter and the method described in U.S. Patent No. 5,220,604 to Gasser et. al.

Applicants and Gasser et. al. both describe a system in which a principal that may be a member of a nested group wishes to gain access to resource guarded by another principal. When a request for access is made, the principal requesting access (the "presenter") presents credentials to the principal guarding the resource (the "recipient"). As is explained in lines 37 et. seq. of Gasser's column 10, "When a principal attempts to access a system resource, the groups having access to that resource must be searched to determine if the requesting principal is a member; each subgroup in a group, and each sub-sub group must also be searched." Gasser further explains that searching in this manner can take considerable time. Gasser attempts to solve this problem by introducing search hints to reduce the amount of time and effort required by the authenticating principal to search the groups.

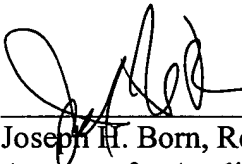
In contrast, Applicants' claim 1 defines a method by which the burden of verifying group membership is removed from the authenticating principal. Claim 1 states that "a presenter of credentials that requests one or more resources to which access is so controlled by a recipient of credentials as to make them available to members of the nested group presents to the recipient of credentials one or more chains of group credentials that prove the presenter's membership in the nested group." Since the principal requesting access supplies group-membership information to the authenticating principal, the authenticating principal does not have to bear the burden of searching groups to verify the requesting principal's membership.

As a result of that explanation, the Examiner indicated he understood the distinction and would accordingly search further to find prior art that is relevant.

Since the prior art currently of record neither discloses nor suggests this method, Applicants respectfully ask the Examiner to reconsider and allow all claims.

Respectfully submitted,

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